

County of San Diego
New: April 23, 1999
Revised: March 15, 1999
Reviewed: Spring 2003

FORENSIC DOCUMENT EXAMINER
SENIOR FORENSIC DOCUMENT EXAMINER

Class No. 005721
Class No. 005718

DEFINITION:

Under general direction identifies, authenticates and examines questioned documents; provides demonstrative expert testimony in court; and performs related work.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

These classes are found only in the Sheriff's Department and the Office of the District Attorney. Forensic Document Examiner classes are non-sworn forensic scientists specializing in the examination of documentary evidence using instrumental, chemical and other laboratory methods to determine age, source, content, authenticity and other related information. This class series is distinguished from the Criminalist classes in that the latter are forensic laboratory scientists performing a wide variety of chemical/biological tests in the areas of serology, narcotics, trace evidence/toxicology, DNA and blood alcohol analyses.

Forensic Document Examiner:

This is the journey level class. Incumbents perform complex work, and are forensic professionals specializing in questioned document examination and providing testimony in court.

Senior Forensic Document Examiner:

This is the lead level class. Incumbents perform the most difficult work; provide technical guidance and training to subordinate staff; coordinate overall laboratory functions of the Document Unit; and are responsible for reviewing case analyses.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES:

Conducts comparative examinations of questioned and specimen handwriting, handprinting, typewriting; restores and deciphers indented, erased, altered and obliterated entries to include burned and charred documents; identifies and/or differentiates inks, papers, adhesives, paper/cellulose tape and identifies counterfeit documents; conducts these and other examinations to resolve questions concerning the age, source, content or authenticity of documents using microscopes, optical aids and other instruments; applies various photographic techniques, ultraviolet and infrared radiation and thin-layer chromatography to conduct examination of documents; incorporates results of examinations into written reports for use by investigative agencies, judicial bodies or other agencies submitting evidence; and provides demonstrative expert testimony as required.

Senior Forensic Document Examiner (In addition to all of the duties listed above):

Monitors workflow to ensure timeliness of completion; conducts technical review of reports to ensure thoroughness and accuracy of results; ensures compliance of section personnel with safety, quality assurance, quality control protocols and other laboratory regulations; provides technical guidance and training to non-laboratory personnel regarding the

collection, preservation and submission of documentary evidence and laboratory capabilities.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Knowledge Level: T = Thorough; G = General; -- = Not Applicable

Classification Level: I = Forensic Document Examiner
II = Senior Forensic Document Examiner

Knowledge of:

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G	T	Forensic document examination.
G	T	Forensic science techniques and procedures.
G	T	Criminal court actions.
G	T	Rules of evidence.
G	T	Laboratory safety practices.
G	T	Reference sources in forensic document examination.
G	T	Latest technological advances in forensic document examination.
G	T	Physical and chemical properties of papers and inks.
G	T	Photography techniques used in forensic documents examination.
G	T	Types of mechanically produced documents and their preparation.
--	G	Training principles and methods.

Skills and Abilities to:

The following apply to both classes:

- Analyze handwriting and handprinting.
- Analyze mechanical impressions.
- Analyze papers and inks.
- Explain technical document examination findings to law enforcement officers and attorneys.
- Interpret altered and indented documents.
- Testify in court as an expert witness.
- Train others in forensic test result interpretation and evidence preservation.
- Prepare reports, evidence, and exhibits for presentation in court.
- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Establish and maintain cooperative relations with various law enforcement agency personnel.

EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE:

Education, training or experience, which clearly demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities stated above. Examples of qualifying education/experience are:

Forensic Document Examiner:

1. Two (2) years of training in document examination in a law enforcement or criminal justice agency, AND, two (2) years of full time independent document work in a law enforcement or criminal justice agency; AND, a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in a physical, biological or forensic science; OR,

2. a. Certification by the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners, Inc.; OR,

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- b. Full membership in the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, Inc.

Senior Forensic Document Examiner:

1. Two (2) years of experience as a Forensic Document Examiner in the County of San Diego; OR,
2. Five (5) years of full-time independent document work experience performing in a law enforcement or criminal justice agency; AND:
 - a. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in a physical, biological or forensic science; AND,
 - b. Certification by the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners, Inc.; OR,
 - c. Full membership in the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, Inc.

SPECIAL NOTES, LICENSES, OR REQUIREMENTS:

License:

A valid California Class C driver's license is required at time of appointment or the ability to arrange transportation for field travel. Employees in this class may be required to use their own personal vehicle.

Certification:

Certification by the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners, Inc. and full membership in the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, Inc. are highly desirable.

Background Investigation:

Each candidate will be subject to a thorough background investigation. Felony convictions will be disqualifying. Misdemeanor convictions, depending on number, recency and severity, may be disqualifying.

Probationary Period:

Incumbents appointed to permanent positions in this class shall serve a probationary period of twelve (12) months (Civil Service Rule 4.2.5).